Some Ethical and Cultural Implications of the Leadership 'Turn' in Education

On the Distinction between Performance and Performativity

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ABSTRACT

Leadership, currently prescribed as a key requirement for effective school organization and management, is examined here as a rhetorical or discursive device, as a 'turn', in the sense used in literary and sociological discussion of the linguistic turn. In the educational sphere, a tacit separation of leadership from issues of governance and management is becoming apparent. This move may be significantly related to an aestheticization of learning, and what is said to be increasingly the performative nature of its application in educational institutions in England. Leadership is inherently relational, but institutes and sustains unequal power relations. The paper argues that a significant distinction should be understood between performance and performativity, analogous to 'event' and 'possibility', which affords unrealized ethical and emancipatory opportunities for educational practice.

KEYWORDS *education, leadership, management, performance, performativity, relationality*

The practical limits of leadership-as-control have . . . become visible through the recognition that educational leadership is a thoroughly inter-human and hence moral endeavour, just as education is. (Biesta and Miron, 2002: 102)

Introduction

The words we use to describe how schools are, and should, be organized and managed, are more than verbal representation of those activities. Language conveys what we 'are up to', as much as what we mean to describe (Learmonth, 2005). The words themselves say something, discursively, about our beliefs, assumptions and aspirations regarding the nature of those activities—the actions 'in themselves'. The language used to describe actions often reflects the relations of power and obligation encountered in their enactment, and facilitates their maintenance and reproduction. Considered as discourse, as a social practice in a specific social context, language 'both reproduces structures and has the potential to transform them' (Fairclough, 2001: 122). Exploring

language, therefore, enables us to learn more about power relations enacted within a particular discourse, and related structures, and their possible transformation. This paper explores the current leadership discourse in education, reflecting on possibilities for desirable change that those in leadership positions, at every level, may not have considered as possibilities, or even wish to contemplate as such.

The Leadership 'Turn'

A change in UK educational policy during the late 1990s regarding teachers' organizational duties and responsibilities encouraged a tacit separation of leadership from issues of governance and management.[1] This change in focus replaced an earlier preoccupation with management by an increasingly generic and more prescriptive concept of leadership. Glatter (1997: 189) has objected to what he terms a dichotomy between something pure called 'leadership' and something 'dirty' called 'management', or between values and purposes on the one hand and methods and skills on the other'. The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) refers to management as involving the use of 'tools', while leadership is concerned with qualities and processes, styles and impact (http://www.ncsl.org.uk/index.cfm). Inspiration, commitment and transformation figure prominently in debate on leadership, often at the expense of analysis and critical inquiry (Thrupp and Willmott, 2003: 143ff.).

What characterizes this shift from management to leadership? Bush (2003: 8), reviewing theoretical conceptualizations of leadership and management for a NCSL publication, opts for the following definition of leadership:

> Leadership is a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes. Successful leaders develop a vision for their schools based on their personal and professional values. They articulate this vision at every opportunity and influence their staff and other stakeholders to share the vision. The philosophy, structures and activities of the school are geared towards the achievement of this shared vision.

Although, as his review also makes clear, management is not necessarily excluded in practice from the duties associated with school leadership, it is possible to draw a clear distinction between the two:

> By leadership, I mean influencing others' actions in achieving desirable ends. Leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others. Frequently they initiate change to reach existing and new goals . . . Leadership . . . takes . . . much ingenuity, energy and skill.

> Managing is maintaining efficiently and effectively current organizational arrangements. While managing well often exhibits leadership skills, the overall function is toward maintenance rather than change. I prize both managing and leading and attach no special value to either since different settings and times call for varied responses. (Bush, 2003: 9, quoting Cuban, 1988)

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Table 1 Hallmarks of leadership and management

Leadership	Management
Asks what and why	Asks how and when
Is strong	Is effective
Does the 'right' things	Does things 'right'
Sets high expectations	Specifies outcomes
Motivates and generates enthusiasm (Earley et al., 2002: 101)	Secures compliance with externally prescribed requirements
Innovates	Imitates
Develops	Maintains
Focuses on people and culture	Focuses on systems and structures
Promotes trust	Secures control
Sees everything together	Analyses what is known
Challenges	Accepts
Shares and empowers	Authorises action
Solves 'problems'	Promotes efficiency

The operational hallmarks of this distinction are readily identified in Table 1, drawn from a recent report commissioned by the DfES on the state of school leadership (Earley et al., 2002) and Hargreaves' (2004) adaptation of Bennis (1989).

In their newly updated fourth edition of *Effective School Management*, Everard et al. (2004) provide an integrated map of management and leadership whose 'key purpose' is given as: 'provide direction, gain commitment, facilitate change and achieve results through the efficient, creative and responsible deployment of people and other resources' (2004: ix). In an expanded version of the new 'map' of management 'competencies', based on government led management standards (MSC, 2004), thinking, people, and task abilities are identified as core categories. What used to be thought of as 'management' duties are now categorized as tasks. Thinking ahead, strategically, innovatively, creatively and opportunistically, and inspiring other people with vision, commitment and respect, constitute the new 'business' of 'leaders' who delegate 'tasks' to 'co-workers'. The leadership 'turn', thereby, institutes a change in a school's internal power relations, between thinking, mobilizing leaders, and compliant, task-directed co-workers, a shift examined further in the next section.

This shift, or 'turn', is analogous to an earlier linguistic, or discursive 'turn' in literary studies, reflecting a shift from an understanding of language as representation, to one in which language is understood as itself a 'performance', used to transact, or construct realities discursively (Butler, 1997; Deetz, 2003). Whereas management could readily be defined, and its duties specified,

leadership tends to be described, often in aspirational and heavily normative terms. Ofsted (2003: 8), for example, has characterized leadership as 'effective' when it is 'inspirational' and shows 'strong commitment to the schools, its pupils and the community'. But such a claim is conspicuously not evidence-based, and is best understood as incantatory, sacralizing the school's historical role and relationship with a putative local community. Leadership within the school is being called upon to provide a social and institutional dynamic and to mobilize local relationships that are no longer sustained by local govern-ment—substituting, it has been claimed, 'choreography' for local accountability and governance (Taylor Webb, 2006). Parents, 'naturally', are expected to 'support' the school's norms and working practices rather than contribute formatively to their development. The inadequacy of choreographed 'answer-ability' as a basis for school–parent relations, purporting to protect children's and parents' 'rights' in the current 'entitlement' culture, is exposed by Ranson et al. (2003: 717), who argue that:

> The dominant mode of answerability cannot deliver achievement because it defines mistaken criteria of evaluating performance, emphasizing the external imposition of targets and quantifiable outcomes as the means of improvement. This is at the expense of a pedagogy which works 'inside-out', encouraging learners to recognize their capability and motivating them to enter into and remake the narratives that give meaning to their lives.

Learmonth (2005: 630) articulates some of the hidden moral and political implications of the 'leadership discourse' as currently deployed in public sector organizations. He (2005: 631) argues persuasively for the importance of looking critically at the language used within these organizations, since 'our representational practices are always irredeemably implicated in the consti-tution of how we think of a "thing" "itself"'. These developments may also be related to efforts within educational and leadership practices to aestheticize learning, according increased importance to the attainment of affective and perceptual capabilities. The 'problem' of improving 'performance', for both teachers and learners, is increasingly being rendered as personal and psycho-logical (McWilliam and Perry, 2006). These, and associated changes, are discernible in the economy generally, especially in the public sector, with implications for work-related learning. Hartley (2003) argues that in education these changes envisage the 'effective' school as an 'affective' school, 'produc-ing' more affectively responsive and creative consumers. Similar preoccupa-tions are evident in related policy initiatives in lifelong learning, the national curriculum and in parent-school relations. Current school leadership prescrip-tions seem to prioritize the surfaces of 'role', 'performance' and 'quality', as necessary for the achievement of selected recordable attainments, or outcomes, and implicitly to value them above responsiveness to personal claims for justice, voice, and inclusion.

Performance

We come now to an aspect of leadership that has received too little critical attention, namely the meaning of the term itself. Etymologically, semantically, and in ordinary usage, the term leadership is replete with relational significance. Leadership, like followership, connotes a relation between positions, from which some agents propose, and others accept and act on stipulated as well as enculturated aims, purposes, directions, and goals (Popper, 2004). The headteacher's responsibilities, for example, in relation to performance management, are defined exclusively in terms of powers and duties of implementation: to ensure that others carry out their responsibilities, that plans, standards and targets are agreed, and that monitoring takes place to ensure that the strategic vision is being realized (DfEE, 2000). as 'powers' they may, in practice, fall short of being coercive, but taken in their context of specification, as underpinning a school's responsibility for 'performance management', they clearly involve a degree of domination, in that 'those subject to it are rendered *less free*, in Spinoza's phrase, *to live as their nature and judgement dictate*' (quoted in Lukes, 2005: 114, original emphasis). Leadership is conceived by government as a device to change and mobilize teachers' behaviour in their professional relations and pursuit of purposes chosen by others. Much current official portrayal of leadership implies that unequal social relations in schools are unavoidable and that effective, planned change requires school leaders to provide a momentum, or source of dynamism arising from a natural disequilibrium of leader and led, between more and less powerful actors. The contrived, almost manipulative nature of the changes required to institute new relationships and attitudes is evident in all three case study schools studied by Muijs and Harris (2007: 129), who conclude:

> The case studies suggest that for teacher leadership to be successful it has to be a carefully orchestrated and deliberate process. They appear to show that where it was most effective, teacher leadership had been carefully put in place through changing structures and culture in a strategic way.

Leadership is thus a central component of a cultural, or in Thrupp and Willmott's (2003: 222–23) expression, 'reculturing' enterprise.

The significance of relationality for leadership, as in all social relationships, is set out by Bourdieu (1998: 31):

> . . . individuals or groups exist and subsist in and through difference; that is, they occupy relative relations in a space of relations which, although invisible and difficult to show empirically, is the most real reality . . . and the real principle of the behaviour of individuals and groups.

Positions are located and held in a wider field of structural relations which are both formed by and lead to the establishment and growth of social and organizational distinctions. Such distinctions, 'possessing a definite

configuration of properties', are 'forms of specific capital' by means of which superior potency, legitimacy and meaning are accorded to some accumulations, enunciations and transcriptions, compared with others. The terms here are taken from Giddens' (1985: 30–4) triadic classification of signification, distribution and legitimation (S–D–L), the structural dimensions of social systems within which their structural properties can be analysed. Investments in various forms of teachers' cultural capital will convert the professional linguistic currency, or discourse (Gunter, 2001: 8–15) of schools and colleges in order to advantage, or inhibit, particular kinds of cultural, economic and social formations, producing winners and losers. In consequence, individual educational experiences will be altered. Yet we know too little about how and why. These dimensions appear to be ignored in many leadership programmes, and in much academic literature on leadership in education. On this, Thrupp and Willmott's (2003) exposure of leadership 'apologists' is essential reading.

The prominence and frequency of the term transformation in leadership programmes, the urgency to replace static, managerially defined authority roles in schools by a more widely distributed set of roles linked to and motivated by dynamic leadership, is now recognizable as a central goal in policy agenda. Leadership employs and sustains a dynamic imbalance, by which existing social relations and associated embedded value systems may be transformed. However, Gewirtz (2001: 373) shows that this strategic attempt in current movements of educational reform, to transform existing relations and values, ignores the extent to which transformation in an increasingly competitive environment will produce losers as well as winners.

In our hierarchically ordered, competitive society, education is a positional good (Hirsch, 1976). In other words there is no room for everyone to be a winner. There will of course continue to be working-class parents who succeed in helping their children to become upwardly mobile. But however successful the government is in reconstructing working-class parents in the image of the ideal-typical middle-class parent, not everyone can be 'successful' or achieve 'excellence' because there are only a limited number of schools or jobs that are deemed to be 'excellent'. So long as hierarchies of schools and jobs exist, the middle classes will always find ways of getting the best out of the system, of ensuring that their cultural capital is more valuable than that of any working-class competitors. So without dismantling the hierarchies that structure schooling and employment provision, it is difficult to see how a genuine widening of opportunities can occur.

The promotion of generic 'leadership skills' and a de-socialized ethic of 'effectiveness' are designed, according to Gewirtz, to make the school a locally responsive but marketized, de-politicized, educational and cultural environment. Leaders are cultivated to enable working class parents and their children internalize middle class values and habits in the belief that 'the way to improve opportunities for working-class students is to universalize the values and modes of engagement of a particular kind of middle-class parent' (Gewirtzm 2001:

376). In this way, leadership 'realizes' the rationality of management by embedding rationalizing habits and skills associated with management and deliberately cultivated in the schools' new organizational culture and life-world. It individualizes and de-socializes education, secures compliance through promotion of cultural norms, and de-professionalizes and instrumentalizes the role of the teacher and approved modes of learning. It is oriented to action rather than thought, compliance rather than resistance, delivery rather than personal emancipation. It belies a concealment of political irresponsibility and a commitment to ideological control.

Performativity

Increasingly, critical academic interest in leadership in education has identified certain cultural changes inherent in recent leadership initiatives that require from participants an orientation to 'performance', sometimes taken to be the same as performativity. Ball, most fully and notably, has articulated this aspect of recent changes and their effects on teachers' lives. His formulation is worth quoting extensively:

> What do I mean by performativity? Performativity is a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic). The performances (of individual subjects or organizations) serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of 'quality', or 'moments' of promotion or inspection. as such they stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organization within a field of judgement. The issue of who controls the field of judgement is crucial. One key aspect of the current educational reform movement may be seen as struggles over the control of the field of judgement and its values . . . Who is it that determines what is to count as a valuable, effective or satisfactory performance and what measures or indicators are considered valid? Typically, at least in the UK, these struggles are currently highly individualized as teachers, as ethical subjects, find their values challenged or displaced by the terrors of performativity. (Ball, 2003: 216)

The 'mode of regulation' referred to here is recognizable in practice in the measures implemented over more than ten years in the form of curricular and assessment specifications and procedures, imposed on institutions at every educational level. Their effects on learning and teachers' lives have been exposed combatively by Hargreaves (2003), Goodson (2003) and Sachs (2003). Reviewing their work, Haggarty (2004: 592) summarizes these changes as 'seeking to transform the teacher's practice into that of technician; a deliverer of pre-designed and carefully scripted and precisely timed packages, guidelines and assessments'.

But in what sense can we speak of such a culture and technology as oriented to performativity? Certainly, we have evidence of the emergence of a performance culture, in the sense that we can also be said to have an audit culture

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(Power, 1999). Such regimes are explicitly normative and compliance led. Performance norms are set, outcomes recorded and comparisons based on measurements attempted through the construction and application of performance indicators. Perryman (2006: 150) summarizes the position as: 'Performativity is about performing the normal within a particular discourse'. The strength and pervasiveness of society's belief in its capacity to verify the efficacy of its institutional achievements, 'ritualized' in forms of audit and standards of compliance, amounts to the emergence of a new cultural form, with a distinctive language or discourse.

Ball (2003) goes on to explain that the operations of the new culture exert their effect through each teacher, as a subject, submitting to the regulatory regime and responding to its claims in the form of fabricated presentations of self and school. Performativity has been defined by Bell (1999) as 'the production of selves as effects'. To the extent that teachers' 'selves' are, under current performance led regimes, produced for particular effects, their sense of personal identity is altered through their engagement in enacted fabrications of self and practices, adopting the managerialist language, approach and apparatus necessary for demonstrating compliance.

But these fabrications are not simply 'false' or lacking 'authenticity'. In his account of how performativity and compliance work, Ball emphasizes how teacher and learner interactions with structural forms and necessities are recursively engaged; they should not be understood reductively, as an inauthentic 'acting out' of forms of action already framed by the language and procedures of power.

> Fabrications are versions of an organization (or person) which does not exist—they are not 'outside the truth' but neither do they render simply true or direct accounts—they are produced purposefully in order 'to be accountable'. (Ball, 2003: 224)

Their purposefulness is determined by the accountability regime itself, not the compliant actor from whom a satisfactory account is expected. Neglecting this distinction risks overlooking the alternative possibility within Ball's critique, whereby teachers can react to the 'rigours of performativity' more creatively and resistantly. Performativity implies a reflexive subject that is contingently self-realizing. The subject here is not the unitary, 'masterful, autonomous subject of liberal thought' (Nelson, 1999: 343), but a non-unitary subject (Braidotti, 2006) with a plurality of selves to be realized.[2] Perryman's (2005: 150) account of performativity, as performing the normal, captures not its limit, but its default mode, necessarily limited and distorting when it is constrained by compliance procedures and "effectiveness" criteria. 'Effects', exemplified in 'performance' outcomes, are completed processes or products, past events, already realized in time. The mode of performativity occupies space as well as time, as in a dramatic or musical performance; it has materiality, movement, sound, and is implicated with human sensory susceptibilities,

or 'affects', and 'takes place' in the transient moment, now, drawing upon and bestowing form, in a time and place (Thrift, 2003: 2019–24), on the affectually laden moment of personal experience. Here, I draw somewhat intuitively on an enchanting and illuminating phenomenological treatment of the ontology of space, by Gaston Bachelard (1964: 94). Bachelard reveals through an anthology of French poetry how human beings use imagination to confer value on, and thereby transform facts and experience, in time and space, through their capacity to create images. 'Space that has been seized upon by the imagination cannot remain indifferent space subject to the measures and estimates of the surveyor. It has been lived in, not in its positivity, but with all the partiality of the imagination' (Bachelard, 1964: xxxv–xxxvi).

Freed from the abstract logic of functional calculation, the 'performative' subject is capable, acting with imagination, of realizing a multiplicity of selves, including a 'fabricated' or 'coping' self, resistant to the 'displacements' enforced by a performance regime. The subject envisaged in the perspective of performativity occupies a position in a field of relations, from which patterns among contexts of experience, feelings, images and memories are drawn upon to organize a personal image of the self, and the possibilities of existence, and of action. These possibilities in thought, exercised among available patterns, open up the possibility of constructing a self-made self, a more 'authored' or authentic extension or addition to the given 'self' of circumstances derived from the 'position' in which the subject finds herself within a field of power relations. By analogy, the teacher, though constrained by external requirements, is able performatively to fabricate alternative versions of teaching and learning, and of the school's 'performance'. In the following section I argue that performativity, as a mode of identity construction in institutionalized social space, can enable the individual subject to escape from a regulatory regime of conformity with the requirements of a normalizing performance schedule.

Distinguishing Performance from Performativity in the Leadership 'Turn'

Performance and performativity should be carefully distinguished, instead of being used interchangeably, as they appear to be in much recent discussion of school leadership. Performance, event, the objectified outcome of provision, represents a currency of positively assessed, completed events, with which a regime of central political control can trade profitably in an electoral marketplace. Performance generates a language ('excellence'), and a calculus ('standards'), encoding a normative framework by which the policy community can direct professional conduct to promote the educational outcomes believed necessary to secure public approval and votes. Moral values and purposes, implicated in educational processes and relationships, are obscured by the apparatus of performance measurement, designed to evaluate practice by reference to 'value-added' increments of learning achievement. This

suppression is matched in the policy sphere, where competing moral claims concerning educational 'goods' are suppressed by the strategic necessity to manage electoral expectations. Education policies are then framed to appeal to that appetite for satisfactions that, it is believed, will be more effectively met wherever an open market for educational consumption 'goods' can be established in place of collective rules.

The shift is paralleled in the new governance of education by a regulatory regime built around evidence of performance, under which under-performing, or 'failing' schools ('failed' according to specified 'performance standards', and therefore requiring 'special' measures), are closed on the basis of evidence-based, centrally determined assessment and intervention (Perryman, 2006). Though unable to protect themselves using traditional routes of political representation (governing bodies and local education authorities [LEAs]), local communities, it will be claimed, are protected systemically by enforcement measures which expose schools more rigorously to inspection and open competition in conditions 'modelled' on free markets. Meadmore and Meadmore (2004), among others, identify schools' and teachers' responses to recent pressures to compete and engage in an enterprise culture as exemplifying a new performativity culture. Not surprisingly, under cultural and financial pressures to become 'enterprising', and 'perform', teachers in many schools, especially those in the private sector, where freedom from regulation exposes them more directly to commercial influences, do use their 'performative' capabilities to create a new identity, one likely to be rewarded in a particular cultural setting. Blackmore (2004: 441), drawing attention to the emotional labour involved in the 'political work' which is inseparable from education, defines performativity as the 'disciplinary system of judgements, classifications and targets towards which schools and teachers must strive and against and through which they are evaluated'. Jeffrey (2002: 531) refers (rightly) to performativity as a discourse, but equates it with the discourse that 'emanates from the importation of an economic market structure for schools, in order to improve their effectiveness and efficiency'. Bottery also (2003: 202–3), attempting to rescue dilution of the concept of 'learning community' from a government instituted 'game' of 'more targets and performativity', seems to equate performativity with performance. In so doing, he risks missing the significance of Ball's (2001: 214) purpose, exemplified in his encouragement of HE academics to subvert the imposed discipline of the Research Assessment Exercise, an arguably oppressive instrument comparable to those used for performance measurement in schools. Ball proposes an alternative possibility of transformation, whereby academics resist imposition of politically imposed norms and subvert the assessment procedure from within. In schools, an example of teacher subversion is presented in a study by Taylor Webb (2006) of two low performing secondary schools in Washington DC, under pressure to improve their student learning scores. There, teachers' 'fabrications' and 'simulations' reveal conscious resistance to and subversion of imposed teaching practices.

> If I don't believe in what I'm teaching, I will subvert it. I will change it. When the doors are open they will see something different than when the doors are closed. (Taylor Webb, 2006: 201)

Performativity denotes pliability, responsiveness, a human capability for active self-involvement in formative social relations. The 'fabricated' response should not be mistaken for 'inauthenticity', nor for a radical move to some moral high ground. Performativity enables us to participate in and co-create an altered cultural and social milieu. In Ball's (2001: 211) encapsulation, 'tactics of transparency produce a resistance of opacity', he conceives performativity as a component of the professional repertoire, a performative space for constructive action instead of submission to a performance-driven ethic. Hoyle and Wallace (2007) are also alert to the ambiguities and 'dramaturgical' dimensions of institutional life, characterizing as 'principled irony' some of the individual and collective strategies of fabrication that evade the institutional consequences of compliance, and so create an alternative ethic and milieu.

The English school curriculum itself, as well as the prescribed leadership culture, has been refurbished to afford greater prominence to learners' aesthetic development, as part of their general learning. The economic background, where so many origins and motives for educational reforms are to be found, is, unsurprisingly, characterized as one in which more occupations in the service industries require emotional labour.

> The pace of fast capitalism requires ever more innovations and patents which can be turned into products. This itself requires the creative talent to come up with new ideas. Leaders too are being called upon to be emotional as well as rational. As for consumption, the market spawns choice. It requires of consumers the capacity to create new 'make-over' identities. They must be in touch with their emotions, and be reflexive, so that they can best choose those products that express themselves and give their lives meaning, however provisional. . . . In the interface between the economy and the self is situated both the creative producer and the creative consumer. In order to be effective as a producer and as a consumer, it is necessary to be affective. (Hartley, 2003: 6–7)

'Aestheticizing' tendencies in the economy at large are also to be found in aspects of work and leisure. Adkins and Lury (1999) show how self-identity is a key resource in the workplace, and assumes new value and significance as part of a trend towards the aestheticization of work through incorporation of aesthetic and cultural practices into the work-role repertoire (Bauman, 1998: 31–2). They cite the work of McDowell and Court (McDowell and Court, 1994; McDowell, 1997) who found that younger men at work 'performed various kinds of body work', and that they were 'aware of the interactive nature of service work—the inseparability of their bodily performance from the product being sold'. To be effective, however, the incorporation of aspects of self-identity into work role requires each individual employee to be a self-monitoring, self-reflexive and self-actualizing, autonomous actor. This emerging requirement

has generated new curriculum developments in schools that call for the addition of 'emotional intelligence' to an extending portfolio of 'intelligences' (Gardner, 1999). 'Creative Partnerships' are described as giving 'school children in disadvantaged areas throughout England the opportunity to develop their potential, their ambition, their creativity and imagination through sustainable partnerships with creative and cultural organizations, businesses and individuals' (DCMS/DfEE, 1999: 28–43). In these ways, according to Hartley (2003: 11):

> The emotions . . . are being appropriated for performative and instrumental purposes. Emotion and capital are now linked productively in a new configuration: emotional capital.

Creativity will be subjected to 'control and discipline' (DCMS/DfEE, 1999: 43) to ensure achievement of purposes and value as products of creative endeavour (DCMS/DfEE, 1999: 30). This mélange of assessment-led funding, aesthetics and commercial values which frame the initiative means that learners can be accredited for successful engagement in creative collaboration:

> Pupil Learning Credits will be developed alongside Creative Partnerships to provide the opportunities for schools to buy into such partnerships and connect schools with local arts bodies and creative organizations, to provide an enriched 'education with character'. (DCMS, 2001: 25)

Aesthetic, stylistic or emotional dimensions are also becoming prominent in other areas of social and civic life. Voting in elections, paradigmatically the exercise of citizenship, is increasingly configured as a moment of individual, consumeristic choice among 'brands' of highly polished ('spun') presentations by style sensitive politicians. Marketization of the health service requires cultivation of emotional literacies for the deployment of consumption 'skills' in the area of health and parenting skills. In a health service increasingly characterized by efficiency in meeting targeted customer needs, consumer health choices are disseminated through media-based strategies serving to shape and manage demand as much as to impart independent knowledge.

The leadership 'turn' in schools, and more generally in public sector management, may be another instance of a more broadly based aestheticization of organized learning, and of a growing awareness of the significance of performativity as a mode of acting upon personal and organizational potentialities of the kind inherent in language and other expressive 'performances' (Deetz, 2003). Performativity connotes potentialities derived from the plasticity and multiplicity inherent in identity formation, and individual responses to the experience of selfhood. But often these responses become routinized, ritualized, conservative, endlessly repeated (Crouch, 2003: 1947), recognizable, we say, as 'conventional' features of human behaviour. These are the responses of the headteachers and teachers whom Hoyle and Wallace (2007: 17) hypothesize 'have fully internalized the discourse [of management] and do not question

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its fitness'. Excessive control of performance, limiting the possibilities of performativity through control of thought and behaviour, is discernible now also in areas of curriculum such as citizenship and business that are intended to shape and re-invigorate individual engagement by young people in political and economic life, and in health and nutrition where social costs and personal risks must be minimized (Share and Strain, 2008). Operationalized as strategies to elicit learner 'choice' and 'voice', they are, for Fielding (2004: 205), 'essentially disciplinary devices aimed at increased compliance and enhanced productivity'. Here the relevance of a Foucauldian perspective is evident: an explanatory framework in which governments 'govern' through their capability to utilize and disseminate knowledge for the shaping of the thoughts and behaviours of 'subjects' (Coveney, 2000: 14–15), a technology of power, whereby government of the self is undertaken through ethical self-formation, a form of training (*askesis*) urged upon individuals by governments for their protection in the face of risks 'in the global world of manufactured uncertainty' (Beck, 1999: 5).

However, performative practice can also encourage personalized strategic or expressive responses to the oppressive effects of unequal power relations, wherever they are encountered. When racial minorities resist identification of their racial group with an externally defined set of stereotypical characteristics, one dimension of that response is an assertion that we will not be told who to be, any more than (as 'free' citizens), we will be told what to do. Performativity is underwritten by acknowledgement of the extent to which humans act through, and are acted upon, by language and other performative acts. The concept has a central role in Judith Butler's influential work on gender and race.

> We do things with language, produce effects with language, and we do things to language, but language is also the thing that we do. Language is a name for our doing: both 'what' we do (the name for the action that we characteristically perform) and that which we effect, the act and its consequences. (Butler, 1997: 8)

For Butler (1990: 25), a performative act constitutes 'the identity it is purported to be' by repeated 'bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds that signify the loss that culture renders unspeakable'. For 'unspeakable', we may read 'impermissible'. Butler defines the performative act as one that realizes the wish to be a self-formed identity, in defiance of conventional structuring forces on identity formation that are already given, pre-formed in the interests of the powerful. Performativity is the mode of capability by which we become other than the made 'selves' that we happen, or are required, or forbidden, to become—the way we become *our-selves*. We should therefore, when examining how leadership is 'played out' in education, distinguish the political/structural regime of 'performance', re-enforced by audit and inspection, from the cultural/structural domain of performativity. Performativity introduces a self-actualizing dimension within teaching and learning repertoires

and relationships, affording a creative mode of individual resistance to the solitarizing implications of performance and control found in much recent prescription for leadership in education—Touraine's (1995, 2000) wilful resistance to a hegemonic and instrumentalizing regime.

Implications for an Alternative Discourse and Educational Ethic

Pedagogy, management strategies, and implicitly, policy also, will need to recognize that the learner's 'desire for individuation' is often presented as wilful resistance to the 'weight of the world' (Bourdieu, 1999) that is experienced as economic disadvantage and social suffering, and may be reflected by both teachers and learners in their reluctant responses to public exhortations to learn for work. Emancipatory learning will occur when framed around the individual's experience of disjunction between the experience of being a socially constructed self and the will to be a subject. Each person, in responding to this inner call, can transform a 'self' (made by circumstances) into an actor, empowered to change through action (Touraine, 1995: 208–9). To actualize this possibility should be the goal of education's emancipatory purpose and could be supported by the under-examined concept of performativity. Learning may then be acknowledged as singular and situated, not a 'reality' but a realization, almost a 'performance', localized in the body and reaching through movement across space and time (Patočka, 1998: 42–50). Bachelard (1964) explains such singular moments as real events and experiences in space and time that are captured, valorized and transformed by imagination. Grounded in relationality experienced as care, among selves and interdependent others, such learning could transform individual 'resistance' into a propensity self-directedly to engage in and generate inclusive social inter-dependencies. Such a propensity creates a culture that is grounded in caring relations among interdependent, performative 'subjects', who require and look for other reciprocating subjects. Derrida (1997: 23), in a late treatise on politics, individuality and freedom, asserts that:

> There is no politics without respect for irreducible singularity or alterity, but there is no democracy without the 'community of friends'.

For teachers and others occupying leadership positions in education, working interdependently within a performance led regime brings difficult challenges. The obligations attached to authority positions include requirements to ensure that colleagues perform according to imposed criteria. But the subversive opportunities and emancipatory possibilities inherent in adoption of reflective and performative practices, exemplified in Ball's (2001) exhortation to UK academics faced with the requirements of the Research Assessment Exercise, are fraught with ethical dilemmas. Moore et al. (2002) identify a subverting

strategy in use by teachers in schools that they conceptualize as *strategic pragmatism*. Typically, this involves the conscious practice of creative, sometimes subversive responses to reform, and to the effects of reform, with each issue being carefully measured and judged in terms of what is and is not acceptable, set against the institution's espoused philosophy and practice. Such a response, rather than being configured in terms of submission to dominant but unacceptable ideologies, could be configured alternatively as self-actualizing, emancipatory, and the best safeguard of professional and institutional health in times of extensive, policy change.

Successfully demonstrated 'performance' is necessary for the survival of teaching and research communities; yet an appropriate ethos for knowledge and learning communities is most authentically fostered in a climate of tolerance, love of the heterodox, and relations of mutual care. The possibility identified here, of 'performativity' as a yet to be realized mode of personal and institutional resistance, affords all engaged in educational leadership with a trajectory from which to move beyond the 'terrors' of an institutionalized culture of 'performance' (Ball, 2003). Strategic pragmatism embodied in performative practices holds out opportunities reflexively to reconstitute current education policies and practices on radically different ethical principles, within educational communities of friends. The social and professional space for engagement to identify appropriate principles and realizing practices still needs to be created. Their goal should be to replace a work-oriented culture founded in social regulation and productivity, with one grounded in mutuality, and oriented to serve others.

Notes

1. In 1995, the School Teachers Review Body (STRB) stated that 'Improving the effectiveness of school management remains one of our most fundamental concerns' (para. 134). In the same year the TTA became responsible for professional development for teachers, and launched HEADLAMP (Headteachers' Leadership and Management Programme) 'to meet the induction needs of newly appointed headteachers' (Newton, 2003). In 1998 the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) was the established, and opened in 2000. The emergence of a leadership 'turn' may be dated to this period.
2. For a rich and illuminating exposition of the concept of *nomadic*, or non-unitary subjectivity, Braidotti's recent work is transforming. Her 'nomadic vision . . . aims to provide a rigorous account both of the mobile subject-positions that are available in late postmodernity, and also of modes of resistance and alternative to the profit-minded values of today'.

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